Large EAC AA Forum Minutes

Meeting Name	Large EAC AA Forum
Meeting Date	05 March 2012

1.   Feedback on the Change of Supplier Contact List

1.1   Following the previous meeting, a public contact list was set up by ELEXON in order to facilitate communication between parties attempting to deal with Change of Supplier (CoS) issues. This contact list has been distributed between people who wished to be included on the list. The attendees were asked for their feedback on the value this list was providing.

1.2   The forum felt that overall the CoS list has proven a useful tool for resolving CoS issues, and would like to see it maintained by ELEXON. The forum felt that contacts on the list should be for specific issues only, as opposed to generic. This would increase the likelihood of issues raised through it being picked up and dealt with in a timely fashion.

1.3   The fact that Suppliers are required to maintain a contact list for the purpose of the MAP08 process was raised. The attendees stated that these contacts are not always sufficient for resolving CoS issues, due to the required contacts for the MAP08 process often sitting within different teams within organisations.

2.   Erroneous Transfers

2.1.   ELEXON had experienced an increase in the volume of queries related to Erroneous Transfers and the Erroneous Transfer resolution process. The Forum was asked if it had experienced increases in ETs recently, and if it had any specific issues with them.

2.2   It was noted that MAP 10, which governs ETs, requires consent on the part of both Suppliers. Some Suppliers have come across this issue but haven't had any problems with resolution. It was however noted that there are inconsistencies between how they handle the ET process, with smaller Suppliers being disproportionately impacted by ETs.

2.3   It was suggested that having a process around ETs similar to that currently in place for disputed CoS reads would centralise the process, provide governance, and in doing so, mitigate many of the inconsistencies of Supplier-to-Supplier interaction.

2.4   One possibility raised was that allowing the 'New' Supplier, i.e. the Supplier pre-ET, to change the D0086 would assist in resolving these issues. It noted that Billing teams (as opposed to Settlement Teams) are not always aware of the issue such that they can easily resolve it with the other Supplier.

3.   D0086s and Issues Identifying the Relevant NHHDC

3.1   One issue previously raised with ELEXON had been that Suppliers had experienced issues producing D0086 reads where the MPAN had previously undergone a change of agent and Metering System. This could then result in the outgoing NHHDC being unable to provide a Meter Read history for the old Metering System.

3.2   The Forum noted that there are inconsistencies in how NHHDCs handle this situation. It was felt that it should be possible for the Supplier to send the required information to the new NHHDC, and for the NHHDC to produce the flows manually. However, some NHHDCs are are unable to do this due to system constraints.

3.3   The forum commented that there is a lack of governance around read history on a change of DC. Were DCs more strongly encouraged to pass on read histories as and when they changed, Suppliers would be less dependent on the non-contractual resolution they currently have to seek, i.e. who they happen to know in the organisation, or who they happen to find themselves dealing with.

3.4   The group felt that a contact list would be important in this instance, as knowing the right person to speak to in other organisations is crucial in resolving the issue.

3.5   It was also noted that the information passed from one DC to another doesn't always match the associated MTDs, and differences in DC systems can cause or exacerbate this. It was suggested that a data cleanse against MDD could help with this problem. It was also noted that there are already mechanisms in place for doing this (D0095).

4.   Pre-Payment Meters

4.1   Those Suppliers who have a large number of pre-payment meters on their books noted that they remain an issue, largely due to the fact that many models can be reset, either innocently or dishonestly. ELEXON noted that a large number of the more intractable Large EAC/AAs were associated with PPMs, but pointed out that the information it receives provides no indication of the type of meter a Large EAC/AA is associated with. Such information would need to be communicated to ELEXON through OSMs or the analyst responsible for the monthly Large EAC/AA process.

4.2   It was also noted that there are significant PPM issues around agreeing CoS readings, and these will most likely not be picked up through EAC/AA monitoring as the majority of these Metering Systems are in Profile Classes 1 and 2. Therefore, given the level of the thresholds relative to realistic consumption, only the very largest EAC/AAs will be captured.

4.3   The attendee from GemServ noted that the Pre-Payment Meter Forum is looking at a wide range of issues around PPMs, with a view to reducing error levels. It is hoped that error levels will drop as a result of the measures agreed through this process.

5.   Dummy Readings

5.1   ELEXON had raised a concern that Dummy Meter Exchanges, which should only be used as a last resort in resolving issues with Meter Technical Details, were being used by some Suppliers to resolve problematic CoS reads, and asked the Forum for its views.

5.2   The Forum suggested that in the majority of cases, it was only being used as a last resort but what constitutes 'last resort' is far from clear.

5.3   Some Suppliers/NHHDCs are, by course of dealings, seen as 'closed doors', meaning that any situation where they are involved is seen as being a *de facto* situation of last resort. In addition, where transposed reads and dial changes are concerned, there is often no appetite for agreeing a read.

5.4   The forum felt that more explicit guidelines on when a dummy meter exchange should be used would be beneficial to the industry. It was felt that lack of clarity around it is an issue across the industry. The DNO representative in attendance noted that DNOs do not benefit from the 'return' on GSP Group Correction Factor, meaning better guidance on this would be particularly welcome from their perspective.

5.5   Issues with identifying meters as having either 5 or 6 digit dials remains a big issue in terms of settlement impact. The group thought this would be the most important set of circumstances to focus on. The Forum suggested checking manufacturer's model details as a means of resolving this issue. It was also pointed out that where a meter model is being used in the same Profile Class, with the same SSC, but 10% of those meters have 5 as opposed to 6 digits, it is reasonable to assume that something must be wrong with that 10%.

5.6   It was noted that ELEXON could undertake comparative analysis of various databases to check for unusual combinations of technical information. NHHDCs and MOAs would potentially have this data. Conclusions on this could then be presented to the PAB.

6.   Smart Issues

6.1.   The Forum were asked whether any new concerns over the SMART rollout had surfaced over the last 6 months, and whether they had experienced any issues with existing smart and ARM meters.

6.2   The Forum felt that confirmation of consumption as genuine would more than likely account for the vast majority of the instances created as a consequence of SMART rollout. This would be due to historical deeming of reads.

6.3   Where error is concerned, correction across multiple registrations will be particularly fraught. Concerns were expressed about verifying final reads where the old meter has been removed from the premises. It

ELEXON

was pointed out that it might be possible to use SMART HH data to profile pre-SMART consumption, thereby providing a means (in some cases) of resolving disputes around final reads of old meters.

6.4   The Forum also suggested that an identifier be added to the Supplier Instance Reports to distinguish SMART issues from the plethora of existing issues around Large EAC/AAs. It was also noted that the D0150 already includes the option of specifying whether a meter is SMART, ARM or dumb. More encouragement should perhaps be provided to MOPs to accurately specify what type of meter they are dealing with.

6.5   The Forum felt that the PAB should offer either guidance or governance, particularly where deemed reads and the profiling of historical 'wrong number of digits' error are concerned. ELEXON stated that ELEXON itself cannot provide any more explicit guidance than the BSCP itself provides.

6.6   The DNO representative in attendance emphasised that DNOs would only be willing to write off a *de minimis* quantity of error – meaning that Suppliers would remain liable for any shortfalls, irrespective of the point at which they may have been caused.

7.   Dialling Issues

7.1   Incompatibility issues on CoS gain for older smart meters were discussed. NHHDCs are seen as being a large part of the issue here, in so far as their systems don't always permit dialling to the software smart meters come with. If the software to read a meter is not present, it is treated as dumb. It was noted that a consultation on the compatibility of old smart meters is on-going, and its aim is to make it economically viable to use smart functions on CoS.

7.2   The Forum thought that the admin password for a meter should allow a reset of all other passwords where 3 or more levels of passwording are present on the meter. This would allow access to the meter's full functionality. It was also noted that the MOPs who installed the meter might not always be willing to pass such details along. The call-centres available for resolving such issues are not fit for purpose and a contact list might be useful in this regard.

7.3   It was also pointed out that instead of needing HH profile data, daily or weekly D10s could be used to keep things working in the interim. Since a lot of different providers offer software, could ELEXON recommend to the SVG, perhaps through STAG (the Software and Technical Advisory Group), that software have the ability to provide D10s, even where the meter does not have any other SMART functionality?

7.4 The Forum asked about the possibility of including a PARMS Serial for D313s. ELEXON stated that this is unlikely to be included in the near future, as more details would be needed on SMART implementation before it could detail such a change.

7.5 ELEXON said it will feed back the Forum's concerns to its SMART team. The Forum emphasised that an interim solution to these issues is needed so that issues with an eventual, wider rollout are not compounded.

8. Changes to PAB and TDC Thresholds

8.1 ELEXON provided an update on on-going work looking at changes to the PAB and TDC thresholds. The BSC Auditor has reduced its error thresholds to reflect shrinking of the energy market in recent years. PAB and TDC error thresholds may therefore need to be brought in line with these reduced thresholds.

8.2 ELEXON stated that were any changes made to thresholds, there would be an interim period prior to implementation. The Forum questioned whether or not it would be wise to lower thresholds in light of the potential issues arising from the SMART rollout. However, Suppliers will be addressing SMART issues anyway, so such a step would not necessarily create huge amounts of additional investigative due diligence.

9. NHHDA Thresholds

9.1 As part of the PAB Large EAC/AA work-streams, ELEXON has been looking at how much additional error would be detected on a monthly basis were the thresholds used in the NHHDA script that populates our Large EAC AA System lowered. The PAB are not willing to close the NHHDA thresholds work-stream until more comprehensive evidence is provided on the extent of additional error where lower thresholds are applied. At some point, NHHDAs will have to run an additional one-off script with lower thresholds, which will then be fed into our systems and passed to Suppliers for investigation. It was noted that Suppliers would be given more than a month to look through these instances.

9.2 The Forum felt that they would more than likely find that the majority of the instances flagged in this way would be genuine, meaning that the benefit to settlement would be comparatively small, given the extra effort involved on the part of Suppliers. Large Suppliers in particular would potentially have extremely large numbers of instances to investigate, most of which are likely to be genuine.

9.3 PAB is concerned with increases in error levels in the mid-term (Smart rollout) and the fact that we have very high thresholds, particularly in the lower Profile Classes. Some Suppliers look at lower thresholds internally, whereas others don't. The lack of consistency across the industry means that they are not willing to abandon the work-stream without sufficient evidence of error levels.

9.4   The Forum pointed out that it is not clear how the threshold would change for each Profile Class, given that the threshold for each is different relative to the average consumption in that Profile Class. ELEXON offered to take a paper to the PAB offering guidance on how best to adjust NHHDA script thresholds for each Profile Class.

10. Root Causes – Breakout

10.1   The PAB have an open 'root causes' work-stream around Large EAC AAs, and ELEXON have been looking at the issue in detail over the last year. Change of Supplier events feature heavily. However, for the purposes of the breakout session on root causes, the Forum were asked to ignore CoS. CoS is not itself a root cause of error, but rather a means by which many root causes are brought to the attention of Suppliers/ELEXON.

10.2   Attendees noted the following as being persistent causes of Large EAC/AAs:

- Transposed reads;

- Pre-payment meters and a host of issues associated with them, but predominantly resets;

- Profile class mismatches;

- MTD mismatches;

- Dial mismatches;

- A lack of read history;

- Short meter advance periods; and

- Uncertainty as to what type of meter read should take precedence.

11. Next Forum

The next Large EAC AA Forum will be hosted by ELEXON in September 2012.

v.1.0
© ELEXON 2012

ELEXON